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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1968, Los Angeles City College inaugurated a program designed to test the efficacy of peer counseling for students from low income families of minority ethnic background. The first 11 months of the program's operation are reviewed in this paper which is written by one of the original 29 students hired as counseling assistants. Emphasis is on the internal development of the program and the problems encountered as the students who were involved organized their efforts toward accomplishing goals--which the author found easier to state than to realize. The effects of student power, salary, and idealism as motivating forces behind the program are discussed in detail, and possibilities for improving the program are included. See also ED 032 045. (Author/MC)

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THE STUDENT COUNSELING PROGRAM:
Criticism and Analysis

by Ron Dyste

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Preface

This preface is written at the suggestion of my friend Mike Capper who thought that a few words in the way of background information would improve the oreintation to, and hence, the understanding of, this paper to a wider audience of readers than it was originally intended for.

During the spring of 1968 Los Angeles City College began operations of what became known as the Student Counseling Assitant Program. It was designed to test the efficacy of using students hired from minority groups to counsel their peers, who were usually minority students as well, and on the whole freshmen. Counselees were selected on the basis of survey data collected during registration under criteria of being students from low-income families living in economically disadvantaged areas of Los Angeles County. As it turned out, many students selected to participate were also those who scored at or below the 10th percentile on the SCAT test, and who have in the past shown weak persistence rates i.e., many left school during their first semester.

Subsequent statistical studies of academic performance and persistence rates have shown the program to have been remarkably effective in solving part of the minority education problem. For those interested in the figures, I would refer them to the excellent studies conducted by Dr. Ben Gold, director of research at Los Angeles City College.

In this paper, authored by a student who served as one of the original twenty-nine assistants hired, attention is focused on the internal developement of the program from its beginning through eleven months of operation. As such, it deals primarily with the problems apt to develop where people are attempting to organize their efforts toward accomplishing goals that are easier to state than to realize, particularly in a somewhat novel setting.

I might take this opportunity to improve the argument by clarifying points which the paper tends to obscure.

Following the "Introduction" the argument proceeds through the next two sections. Briefly, I argue that student power as a motivation developed among many of the assistants because there was a lack of leadership among the authorities initially in charge of the program during its first weeks of operation. My analysis attempts to trace the

interaction between the students and the authorities in terms of three motivations -- student power, which was a pre-disposition among about one-third of those originally hired; the need to justify pay; and the urge to lofty motivation among students e.g., the motivation to help needy students.

The argument, which views these motivations in relation to the events to which they gave rise, urges that the failure of leadership among authorities facilitated the rise of student power because there was pressure to begin work from the need to justify compensation, and this at a time when no one really knew what kind of work should be done. Further, in the final section, I argue that the director's attempts to contain student power after his arrival largely failed because he did not fully perceive the nature of its underlying dynamics, as evidenced by his methods of coping with the general dynamics of coordinated group effort.

These dynamics are widely conceded: that the coordination of effort among people involves reshaping motivations which they carry with them into a new project, and the process by means of which this is accomplished involves determining project goals in the developement of which all group members participate. Of course, these dynamics are more easily stated than guided, especially when outside administrators bring pressure to bear on those given responsibility for their guidance.

The reader should pay particular attention to these sections, especially if he is disposed to prove the argument inadequate. For they bear heavily on the real point, which I do not in the paper clearly state. It is this: that the commitment to effort among students in a project like this involves a dual thrust. Firstly, minimization of physical need via assured pecuniary reward, both in regularity of payment and in constancy of amount consistant with suitable policy (which does not necessarily mean a current policy). And, secondly, maximization of effort via appeal to idealism as a student motivation. Given the former, the latter is crucial.

3.

Friends have pointed out weaknesses in the argument. Essentially, they say that student power was a predisposition with those who came to advocate it, and that, hence, any circumventing measures designed to cope with it would only have modified its manifestation, that is, student power would

still have been around, causing problems. Further, they complain that I erroneously imply that student power can be easily handled when, as a matter of fact, it is very difficult to handle.

Others argue that I seem to place the burden of responsibility for what went wrong onto students, implying that innovation for change lies predominately with "authorities". And most everybody agrees that my connection between the three motivations -- student power, pay, and idealism -- is too tenuous to be of practical analytical value.

In a sense, these are very nagging criticisms -- especially as I do not particularly disagree with them. It is true that student power, where it premanifests itself, is prone to stick around. Frankly, I am in favor of it sticking around. The point is that student power, or the power vested in "authorities", by themselves, are likely to lead into non-productive enterprises a dis-proportionate amount of the time. And that is not so good. The issue centers more on organizing effort into cooperative enterprises, and less on ways of consuming effort in tripping one another up. This is an old problem never completely solved. I do not think conceding the problem with a view to not doing much about it is very useful. The paper is an attempt to do something about it.

It is unfortunate that some readers have thought me too facile on the problems associated with handling student power. Were it so, I do not think I would have spent much time describing how to handle it. Administrating human effort is rarely easy, and I do not think the paper implies that in this case it is. If the paper does imply that handling student power is easy, the reader should know that the author did not intend it to. I might remind those who prefer to labor the point that difficulties in most things arise from a lack of understanding, and that to a large extent it is precisely such a lack here that causes many students to get upset.

As to complaints about the connection between motivations I have very little to say. Tools for analysis are generally chosen on account of their practical application, and the selections made are always the result of the investigator's judgement as to what is relevant. So opinions are likely to differ.

A final note. The reference to "Friday meetings" in the "Introduction" refers to the weekly gatherings which the assitants had with the program director. The paper originally was to have been an evaluation of those meetings, which were supposed to be a kind of continuing training period.

R.D.
January 1970

Introduction

In writing this essay I have acquired a growing sense of obligation. To anyone aspiring to eventual professional status punctuality is of prime importance. Yet, I have completed this study only some several weeks after it was originally due. And I am very grateful to the director who was patient enough to have extended the deadline from time to time (at my inevitable requests); I can only wonder as to the wonderful increases in his expectations as regards the final result. Hence, my obligation to produce something decent has grown accordingly.

The original essay was to have been concerned with the effectiveness of the Friday meetings in furthering my knowledge of counseling techniques, furthering my understanding of student power, freedom and responsibility, and, in the end, I was to have described along what lines I might institute a similar program.

As the tense above might suggest, I have not followed precisely along those lines. This is another blow to professional aspirations. It is not good for the subordinate to presume to know how much better than his superior's is his understanding of what questions need to be asked and answers attempted.

Yet, that is what I shall appear to have done. But perhaps there is hope for me. Albeit I began the essay in terms of the assigned questions, and as a matter of fact, completed it, I was dissatisfied as to the result in that it seemed too narrow. Discussing student behavior in a program as novel as student counseling is difficult enough without attempting To place it into a wider perspective. Yet, having completed the initial undertaking, I felt such an attempt was necessary. To anyone familiar with the individual whose concern is a particular subject, and whose method is to probe ever more deeply into increasingly narrower aspects of that subject, the danger of losing perspective will become evident -- the investigator risks becomming ignorant. How much better to view the subject comprehensively, to see where it fits into the flow of related events within which it has become so important.

Thus, when dealing with the students of the program I have sought to view their performance during the Friday meetings against the background of circumstances within which that performance took place.

By viewing matters in this way I hope to weight the argument more in favor of the program's continuation, and eventual expansion.

2.

Much comment has been expressed regarding the Student Counseling Program. Some have said that the program, which makes use of students in counseling other students, has much to offer in the way of providing a useful alternative to violence in overcoming some of the problems of our time. Others agree but complain that the participants are less concerned with counseling than with proselytizing as to the evils of the "system", and urging that something has got to change -- or else. Still others, concerned about school records and the safety of school property, and otherwise indifferent to the program, are agreed as to its need but are happy that someone else is in charge.

Such comment, which certainly is not the sum of it, derives generally from those who view our social problems with clear and steady (if indifferent) gaze. Or, perhaps more accurately, it derives from those who concede that change in our society is needed, but who do not take specific methods of change very seriously.

But a lot of people do take our social problems -- and their possible means of removal -- seriously, and I think that many of them are or were involved in the Student Counseling Program. The program has had a hectic time of it now and then, and doubtless those of us in it have muddled things pretty badly from time to time. But, over the months, I think many of us have begun to realize that internal problems notwithstanding, the program has accomplished much in terms of helping many students, directly, and by implication, has helped many others by casting at least some light on the direction towards which people can go to meet some of our pressing needs.

Another thing we have begun to learn is that an important part of accomplishment is being able to determine where we have failed. And as this involves being somewhat honest, it turns out to be the most difficult part. We generally feel urged to adumbrate as to our successes whenever we think survival depends on "success". We tend to forget that failure is as important to success as success itself, for it is through identifying and acting upon our weaknesses that success is not only enhanced, but sustained.

3)

Thus, in the present essay, I have attempted to view the program as honestly as I could. I may have wound up stepping on some toes, though of course, I haven't meant to.

I should mention the outstanding weakness of the essay: its highly theoretical nature. Although I have attempted to combine empirical observation with careful analysis, my only real accomplishment is to have recorded personal opinion. No doubt this will be highly satisfactory to those for whom wisdom is identified more with "long" experience in interpersonal relations, along with minor concessions to statistical data, than with anything students have to say. In this, I will disturb the assurance of no one. I leave that to others whose dedication is well known.

As we shall see, student power played a significant and continuing role in the development of the Student Counseling Program. Our first task then, is to examine its roots as applicable to the program. Our need is to understand the background of behavior which, during the first six weeks of operation, influenced the environment into which the director came. Next, we propose a course of action which the director might have undertaken to minimize student-administration discord. We then view the actual performance of the director and the students. Finally, we attempt to consider the meaning of what occurred, both in terms of the role of student power in programs of this nature, and in terms of the importance of the role of the director.

And now, before turning to the larger task, it is always good for the soul of the author to make concessions to unoriginality. By tradition, good exposition demands it. Thus, nothing which I have written has not been said some time before, nor have I claim to any original insights. When making use of the material of other writers I generally have managed to plagirize whenever the urge has afflicted me. These matters are indicated by suitable notation. Finally, responsibility for errors or for just plain bad thinking is mine.

Prelude: The Setting

The thrust of the student counseling effort as made implicit by the director when he arrived, some six weeks after the program had already been underway, was to aid the counselee in acquiring a better sense of personal worthwhileness, a necessary ingredient to success in probably anything. By combining the advantages of inter-student relations with some knowledge of basic counseling methodology, it was hoped that student counselors could provide the counselee with encouragement, advice as to study methods, and information regarding occupations after graduation, or transfer requirements to four-year colleges. Providing the student counselors with training adequate to the task meant that they become familiar with counseling techniques; as many of the counselees were to have personalities high in need of acceptance, encouragement, and success, the urgency of learning basic counseling methodology became even more important -- as everyone knows, counseling involves its own risks, which can be costly within the terms of human emotional uncertainties. Thus the need for learning basic methodology, and its limitations.

The director recognized this need. But his efforts to provide the counselor trainees with the necessary background during the training period and subsequently during the Friday meetings, were often blocked. In this, the trainees were much responsible. But so also were those in charge of the program before the director arrived. In fact, when he did arrive the atmosphere was one of considerable confusion. To understand why, and therewith acquire some sense of the special problems with which the director had initially to contend, we examine the first six weeks.

1.

As noted, when the director arrived, confusion reigned. Nor was this confusion a special phenomenon; indeed, it had been general throughout those first six weeks, and some say that it was so throughout the entire development of the program. There is no mystery as to how it developed; as always in human affairs, confusion is the special product of those whose efforts are directed toward accomplishing what to them is unknown.

The research design, in terms of which the program was to proceed,

called for hiring a director whose task was to develope a training program which would prepare trainees for roles designed to test the viability of using students to "aid" professional counselors in communcating and helping "disadvantaged" students with greater effectiveness than hitherto had seemed possible. The roles to be played by the trainees were envisioned at first as being more passive than dynamic i.e., contact with counselees would be limited with much of the trainee time being spent doing clerical or office work. The trainee was there to lift some of the administrative burden of the professionals, thus freeing them to spend more time seeking out and helping the disadvantaged student.

But the director was not immediately available. And, therewith, neither was a training program. This led, from the onset, to a lack of direction and specification as to the requirements of the program, and further, it led to problems of a large dimension.

For, firstly, those in temporary authority, faced with the immediacy of the new project, and unable to commit themselves to anything specific, sought to effect a transitory program by means of which those already hired could be kept "busy", preferably doing work which would be useful later.

But busy doing what? Apparently, no one knew. But in accordance with the non-policy which soon developed, the temporary authorities encouraged suggestions from the students recently hired, a tactic reinforced by the former's sense of democratic conscience.

We may now note the character of those initially hired. Many were students gifted with a special political acuity, as evidenced by their leadership in well known dissident organizations on campus. Others displayed less leadership ability, but showed remarkable tendencies to persuasion. All were anxious to help needy students.

Given these characteristics, the students naturally availed themselves of the advantages of that democratic conscience, and suggested themselves into crucial roles.

2.

Discussions followed. The process of exchanging views as to the nature of the program, coupled with the immediate need for specification as to what to do, and this conducted within an atmosphere of uncertainty,

accommodated itself well to the precepts of student power i.e., greater participation in various administrative and academic decision making. Having encouraged suggestions from the students, it should not be supposed that students failed to encourage acceptance of those suggestions. This, as may be denied, may have led to incipient feelings reflecting stress on the part of the temporary authorities, akin somewhat to the reflection of Pandora once having opened the box.

Thus, the students suggested (or, more improbably, accepted the suggestion) that they should play a part in selecting new student trainees. The program being novel, trainee qualifications beyond those given against work-study criteria, we may suppose to have been unknown. This helps to explain the fortunate coincidence in student-administrative goals at this point, for each group worked with the other in deciding the additional criteria, and making selections against them. There is a certain assurance in the ignorant leading the ignorant.

The selections were made, if not with some disagreement. In some cases, the temporary authorities took the final say (I was one of them). Those newly selected would enter the program later, when the director arrived. Meanwhile, the existing trainees had had a crucial experience in the excercise of power.

But that wasn't all. Work had to be found, hopefully useful work. As idealistic motivations at this time were somewhat distant (e.g., the motivation to help students), students and administrators faced a more immediate and pressing one -- justification for pecuniary reward. It is not good to pay people for sitting around, and even payment for discussion reaches a limit.

So the counseling handbook was conceived and committees were formed to effect its construction. In deciding its content and purpose, as well as conducting the research necessary in collecting relevant information, the students were left much to themselves. This development may be regarded with some curiosity; the experienced were allowing the inexperienced to construct a handbook for guidance in counseling. In this, there is a strong presumption in favor of having the trainees actually do counseling, contrary to the research design. And no doubt the trainees understood matters in this way. Confidence in the ability of the students to develope such a handbook must have been high among the temporary authorities -- perhaps earlier student efforts were deemed

impressive -- but students were now actively engaged in doing work for which they were manifestly unqualified: developing a handbook for student counseling without having had any experience in counseling. In addition to the handbook, work was found in aiding the SCAT testing, and trainees responded eagerly to the opportunity for meeting students (in small groups) who were selected from certain high schools.

Results of these efforts were two-fold: work was found to account for recorded time, so pay was justified; and students, greatly on their own, achieved predictable accomplishments.

For though they took the idea of constructing their handbook very seriously, they discharged their responsibility to do the necessary work involved rather more casually. Thus, many of the reports (e.g., on employment,scholarships, student services, etc.) were prepared incompetently, and were generally late in coming in. Poor reports had to be redone, some were discarded, and others were added. And further, trainees began to develope the habit of coming to work at times in keeping with convenience. Not all of the students did. But enough. Delays in starting meeting were occurring well before the arrival of the director.

Given the inexperience of the students and the general uncertainty surrounding the program, none of this is surprising, and hardly more might be expected. Indeed, the point is not what was materially accomplished during this time. Rather, it is what was happening to student attitudes.

With the sense of decisiveness and independence which grew out of partly setting qualifications for, and selecting new trainees, along with the relative freedom with which students worked on the handbook, plus the sense of responsibility developed by trainees when meeting and talking to students at the SCAT sessions, it is not surprising that trainees soon began to think that the program was going to be a student run operation. And given the characteristics of the trainees, it is not surprising also that these nascent thoughts should be associated with student power.

Time passed. And with it so also grew student feelings of independence. Eventually, things got mutually reinforcing: the novelty of the program plus the lack of a director, as noted, led to confusion on the part of the temporary authorities; confused, they were also indecisive, and students gradually accepted a quasi-decision making role to take up the

slack; as students took on greater participatory roles they devised plans and needs for work -- to the undoubted relief of authorities; with greater student decision making came greater student freedom, less supervision, further increases in freedom and growth of associated feelings of student independence, and new awarenesses as to believed extent of student power; finally came the view that the program would be student run.

And here lies the nub: when the idea that the program would be student run reached the threshold of awareness, the authority of student power was established. The die was cast. Having conceded the authority of student power, it became necessary to affirm whatever that authority had effected, and no matter how incompetently effected, work sanctioned by the authority had to be affirmed positively. Moreover, given the exiguous amount of work actually done, it became necessary also to assert its importance, indeed, work accomplished was viewed as vital.

Nor was that all. To concede the importance of toil sanctioned by student power insured the further concession that hard work must have gone into it -- it could not be otherwise. For to assert that a job is important and vital, while implying a frivolous or laxidaisical approach to its execution is to invite an inconsistency which affects the validity of the sanctioning authority -- here, student power. And this could not be allowed, nor was it. As will be observed, given birth, the urge to self-preservation is strong.

3.

We may now view the setting into which the director came with improved confidence. He arrived at a time when student power had recently (or was rapidly being) consolidated. The students had got the view that the program was to be student run, with the director playing an advisory role. And he was so notified. The students were used to doing things their own way, and they were not used to being told what to do. They were persuaded as to the importance of their work, and this rationalized their pecuniary rewards. They were accostomed to tardiness.

As we soon shall see, the impressions of the director were as different as were his intentions, and he set himself the task of apprising the students of what these were. In a nutshell, these were to develope an internal organization wherein interaction between the director and

the students would lead to cooperation in advancing the aims of the program, but with guidance and authority placed ultimately in the hands of the director.

We now may see the possibility for student-director discord. And we are soon to view the actual discord which took place. But first, given the nature of student power as described, and given the aims of the director as noted above, I suggest what course of action the director might have taken. It is important to realize that these suggestions are based on observations and the criticisms which follow. No one should suppose that my proposed course of action constitutes an alternative whose use was possible at the time. This is based on hindsight, a somewhat unreliable guide to action immediately needed. But hindsight is a useful tool for developing some foresight for which a future need might one day arise. By suggesting how he might have proceeded, I hope to illuminate the reasons as to why he partly failed. To these matters I now turn.

10)

What Might Have Been Done

To understand how best to have handled the situation as just described we need to know something about student motivation. Student power is at best a political tactic, urged because students often doubt the efficacy of administrative measures to solve problems. If the acquisition of some control over college functions per se were the sole motivation students had upon entering the program not much could be said here. Students would eventually have wound up where they they did at the end of the first weeks regardless of other factors. And the preceding analysis would be irrelevant.

But to so assume is to impute students with a diabolical sophistication reserved only for Caesars, Hitlers, and possibly some Senators. But if we assume some malleability in human personalities, if we concede that people can be persuaded, that they can change their minds, then we can view student power as a manifestation of complex and deeper motivations. And it need not be a problem.

So before saying what might have been done, we will take a look at motivation, after some preparatory remarks.

However urgent the need to pay rent, few "involved" students would urge that their sole motivation for helping needy students is the periodic paycheck. Nor is their motivation generally of this type, although of course it <u>is</u> a factor. Even the most ardent follower of Mao requires sustenance. Man, indeed, lives not by faith alone. In the event, most students, like most teachers, would consider insulting any suggestion implying that effort depended on pay.

The situation is said to be similar among corporate managers, most clergymen, and the President of the United States. It is so also, no doubt, with the program director. To admit that amount of effort is associated primarily with amount of pecuniary reward is to admit that you are an inferior human being. We now know that above a certain minimum income, people prefer to identify effort with other, more lofty goals.

Students in the program were (and are) different. But their earnings, generally, do not approach that certain minimum level, and so pecuniary reward is apt to take on somewhat more meaning than otherwise might be the

case. On the whole, students do not expect to earn that minimum income. There is a certain pride in being a struggling student. Nevertheless, students do at times show concern over pecuniary reward, as do other people. But with the former, it is likely to take the shape of complaints over regularity of pay, and consistency in amounts; their small earnings make their limited obligations big ones.-- hence the nature of these complaints. And indeed, it was so with those in the program.

But students have their own lofty goals as well. And they show no less compunction than do others at too close an association between effort and pay. In fact, they frequently show more as dependence on pay is usually greater. This is because greater dependence implies some vulnerability, and hence, they are exposed to the possibility of coercion. This is not good. As we shall see, resistance to anything that implies complusion militates against group efficiency, given the illusion of alternative forms of employment. And compulsion interferes with pursuit of lofty goals.

3.

Ideally, the goal of the director as earlier stated -- engendering cooperation between himself and the students -- seems to have been about the best. We can imagine how effective might the program have been had students shared the goals of the director, and he theirs. Motivations underlying so desireable a condition would not be pecuniary in nature. They would be more humanitarian, and imbued with overtones of righteousness.

In short, they would involve identification and adaptation.[1] For these are the motivations that most powerfully coordinate the efforts of the members of the group.

Indentification and adaptation as motivations are mutually interdependent, and their effectiveness depends ~~in part~~ on the abscence of compulsion.

Indentification occurrs when the individual views the goals of the group as superior to his own. He sees that the group is capable of doing what he alone could not. For this reason he works to accomplish its goals.

But adaptation is a further, and sometimes a stronger, reason. In submitting to the group the individual sees the possibility of influencing what the group undertakes to achieve i.e., he sees the possibility of

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1. John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State, New York: The New American Library, 1968, Chapter 11. I have adopted Professor Galbraith's terminology and ideas for my purposes here.

adapting its goals to his own. Submission(in the form of identification) to the group is exchanged for the possibility of adapting it to one's own goals.

Compulsion excludes these possibilities for reasons that will escape no one. Compulsion introduces conflict between those who set the goals of the group, and those who work to accomplish them. When individual effort is forced, identification with the goals of responsibile authorities is impossible,, except perhaps to the perverted masochist. And given the individual's powerlessness vis-a-vis the authorities, the hope for adaptation is also excluded.

It is safe to surmise that a major goal of the new director in pursuit of his own aims would be to aline the goals of students with his. And it is probable that adjustments to his in accommodation to some of theirs would have facilitated a rapid advance toward mutual identification and adaptation of overall goals in the program. These developments would have resulted in the cooperation sought by the director, and would have retained the integrity of his authority.

We now briefly examine the growth of student power during the first weeks from the standpoint of its deeper motivations.

Recalling the lack of specification as to the goals of the program, and the resultant confusion, we saw how student participation in decision making increased. We saw also how work had to be found. The motivation was pay. This both students and temporary authorities tacitly understood.

We must note several things. The lack of goal specification, along with the abscence of a training program which would aid in coordinating and solidifiying any goals possibly chosen, excluded from the onset any chance of developing the type of interaction required for the growth of identification and adaptation as motivations. (Interaction refers to that between students and authorities.) So pay became primary. But, given the immediacy of the new project, and the need for work, pay assumed a role akin to compulsion i.e., work <u>had</u> to be found to justify compensation. This forced lofty motivations (e.g., helping students) into the background. But pecuniary motivation as a primary one is unacceptable to students, as noted. So other motivations approached the level of awareness. These motivations were consistent with thecharacteristics of the students employed, that is, they were apt to be governed by needs as defined by

the students. As the students were associated with militant campus groups, their needs would be influenced by modes of thought peculiar to those groups. These modes included student power. And given the abscense of any method by which student opinions could be exchanged without inter-student deprecation, it follows that the more militant student, the leader, would dominate in setting student goals. The others,identifying with the student more than with the confused authorities, followed. The result was the establishment of student power, and an incipient schism between authorities and students. Nor was this all. Once conceded, student power provided the atmosphere within which student cohesiveness could be maintained, and further, it provided the rationale for receiving pay. Pay could now recede from its primary role. Student power had effectively replaced it. This explains why student leaders have continued to associate the program more with poiltical activity than with student needs.

So how might the director have proceeded? Might he not have simply apologized for being tardy, stated that he understood how hard all had worked, but that he had his own ideas and please bear with him?

Probably not. That kind of approach would doubtless have produced a distinctly noticeable if predictable response, similar to that of the college president recently informed by local militants that he is totally irrelevant. Presumably, he would aim to aline the goals of students with his; he would seek to persuade students as to their need for him; and these he might achieve via a training program designed to allow the interaction and exchange of information needed to insure the acceptance of his authority, promote identification and adaptation, and avoid the wrath of student power. But primarily, he would want to stress counseling, its techniques, and its pitfalls.

To accomplish all these things he might begin by emphasizing areas of counseling with which the students were unfamiliar, but which were of obvious relevance to the program. Converting the attitudes of students would proceed as they became increasingly aware of their need for "informed" guidance. As students gradually accepted this need confidence and respect for the director would grow accordingly. And to this support would be added depending on the skill with which he maintained interest in a given topic, and the sense of fair play he demonstrated when handling disputes.

As he would want to avoid issues which might challenge his authority too soon, these tactics would be useful.

The thrust of these efforts would be to focus attention on counseling and nevermind organizational matters. This would mean having a dynamic training program, preferably one with much student participation.

Thus when introducing the difficulties of counseling he might pose problems and allow, say, the more militant students/to lead discussions on them. By remaining somewhat passive, especially at first, and interfering only to prevent students from bogging down, or to make a point, he would ostensibly preserve the integrity of student power while actually eroding it. For these discussions would make it increasing clear to students individually that there was a significant gap between their ideas as to the content and purpose of the program, and what it actually entailed. This realization would be especially pronounced in those who led discussions, given the difficulty of maintaining verbal exchange in topics about which they had limited knowledge. Nothing so effectively humbles the individual, or the group, as when it is forced to face its own ignorance.

Of course the director would have to identify the leaders. Given the real personalities involved, this would have posed no problem. Nevertheless, by limiting the above discussions to, say, 45 minutes, time could be allotted for bull-sessions. These would have considerable importance. Attention could be given, in a somewhat more casual setting, to the goals of the program. What had the students to say about these? What were the directors ideas? (These would emphasize the more lofty aims and difficulties of counseling.) The director would have received valuable insights into the feelings of the group, and identification of leaders would have been facilitated.

And more than that. Sessions of this sort would have provided the director the opportunity to investigate and build on the penchant which students have for more lofty goals -- not as a means for duping them -- but as a means for finding motivations other than pecuniary which exact greater appeal. This would have had the effect of further eroding student power/by providing an alternative to its need, and, further, it would have helped to engender that sense of warmth and cohesiveness vital for the success of the group.

Training would include practice counseling (as was actually done) but with the advantage of having each trainee receive counseling from the

director himself. This is training with a personal touch. This process would be accomplished during the same time that students would themselves be practicing on each other, and in the same room. This would avoid the distrust that might accompany private counseling sessions, given that the students were predisposed to be sensitive to anything which might imply a threat to student power. And it hardly need be said that there would have been a mutually beneficial exchange of insight between the director and each student -- at the personal level.

As the director would be coming into the program direct from another job, it is fair to assume that he might be somewhat unprepared to implement a careful and exhaustive training program. So these proposals would seem simple, direct, useful,in short, emminently appropriate. He might even have taken advantage of any unpreparedness -- by conceding it, and inviting suggestions as to what students thought training might include. This is another ostensible fillet to the perservation of student power. At no time however, would the director transmit the impression that he was dependent on the flow of student ideas. That was the error of the previous authorities -- and we have seen the results.

Training of the above kind might usefully have been augmented by regularly scheduled visits of professional counselors, each to present a prepared and time limited (say, to 45 minutes) discussion of their specialties. This might have helped to disspell some of the mostly invidious misconceptions held by the students about the professionals. Students would be required to, say, take notes, and of course they could ask questions. (This type of method of informing students, though actually used sparingly, usually showed good results.)

A special word about the handbook. Its completion might usefully have been encouraged by the director, by, say, reducing those working on it to a committee of about three. The committee would present the proposed copy to the group at a later time for approval, which by then might not have been forthcoming anyway. But the book would have been a good exchange for group unity. For even if it was of little functional value, its psychological importance would have been (and was) strategic.

This then is a broad outline as to possible moves of the director, given his goals, and the environment into which he stepped on arrival. It is not a proposed training program. It is merely an attempt to indicate what might have been done in the circumstances. The essential character of the tactics, as noted, would have been to stress counseling, demonstrate its techniques, and indicate its hazzards. To a discussion of what events actually took

place upon the director's arrival, and to a view of the actual training program, we now turn.

Description and Analysis: What Actually Happened

It is time to view what actually happened when the director arrived, to look at the training program, and to relate its effects to the Friday meetings which followed. In this, I will be relying somewhat heavily on memory, so things might get risky. (Cynics might be advised to view that which follows with the utmost regard to suspicion.)

2.

With the arrival of the director a training program was instituted. The first group, whose activities during the first weeks have been noted, received training separate from the second, which they had helped to select.

Initially, training consisted of rating the importance of various problems which students might have. This was a particularly good way of alerting the trainees to the kind of problems they might encounter. I think trainees learned much in the way of seeing that there was much more to counseling than they had until then thought the case. And the discussion process by means of which these problems were rated probably began the important task of developing a sense of group cohesiveness.

Having been alerted to the possible types of problems they might meet, the next step might have been to show/possible trainees methods as to dealing with them, especially the more common ones like problems with parents, uncertainty as to major, or the anathema of study. And then some practice follow-up.

Training followed somewhat along those lines. After learning about some common problems the group was broken into pairs (counselee-counselor) wherin one trainee would "counsel" the other. This was a good tactic: the trainees had a chance to gain some practical experience, and as pairs consisted of strangers trainees had the opportunity to get to know one ANOTHER better, another way by which group cohesiveness was promoted. I think that some success was accomplished in preparing the trainees for the real thing.

During these early sessions the director was able to maintain high interest and he displayed skillful tactics in getting trainees to think carefully about the problems under discussion.

But soon weaknesses began to appear. The process of practice counseling was neither carried out far enough nor, perhaps, were the trainees sufficiently prepared to counsel one another. And this was due from having treated

methods of dealing with problems (such as had been identified) rather insufficiently. In fact, the only semblence of treatment that I can recall was an excessiveness in dealing with the "problem" of introducing oneself to a counselee, and two instances where an actual counselee was interviewed by the director, both examples from which the professionals might have derived greater benefit.

The early training sessions also took on an unfortunate feature - boredom. Indeed, trainees frequently got the impression that not much was being accomplished. The sessions, which usually began with interest, soon turned into lengthy periods during which similar topics were covered, and the same problems were rehashed. Part of the explanation lies with the poor punctuality of many of the students when attending the sessions. As noted, they were accostomed to coming to meetings somewhat at their convenience. Late arrivals disrupted the proceedings, and frequently the director would re-explain what had been covered with those present. This stretched discussions, time was lost, and frequently a discussion was never carried to a climax.

Punctuality was of course stressed. But it was not enforced. The results, given the vanity of student power, were uninspiring. The attention given to late comers so as to insure that they missed little was tantatmount to condoning impunctuality, given the lack of sanctions to discourage it. The process of attempting to bring up to date those who had missed some of the proceedings began to fatigue the others. And that went not unnoticed by all. A pattern seemed to appear very rapidly. Eventually, the element of pay was introduced to emphasize lateness. These things soon combined to create a slow atmosphere for the sessions, and tardiness increased -- why not, if one could miss the beginning of a slow meeting and still be brought up to date?

People continued to come late, and some didn't come at all. This led to further discouragement. The director became visably if tactfully upset. Utterences were heard. Comments were exchanged. In other words, things got worse.

3.

Responsibility for these matters must I think fall firstly on the director. As always in situations concerning leadership, particularly leadership in group discussions, the tempo and climate of verbal exchange is set by the leader. If he fails to meet expectations which he frequently

sets himself, the sense of purposiveness and direction which the group initially acquires, along with the lader's reputation, diminishes. This is especially so in a quasi-classroon situation as was the case during the sessions, popular (student) indignation to the contrary notwithstanding. At first the performance of the director was outstanding in terms of generating interest in a given topic. This led to expectations on the part of students which soon were dissappointed. Interest declined, and pay as a motivation was introduced to effect punctuality. That it had marginal results probably suggests why it was used thereafter.

4.

Such were the early sessions. There followed a middle period during the summer of 1968 when some actual counseling experience was accomplished with students of the Upward Bound Program, and students in Developmental Studies. I think training during this period, which consisted of discussion as to trainee experiences with counselees, was of great value. But I doubt that enough of it was accomplished. Other matters began to intrude.

Students continued to aid the SCAT testing sessions throughout the summer. From time to time minor disputes would erupt between students and authorities conducting the tests, and these sometimes had repercussions on the professional counselors. But these were minor.

When students aided during Fall registration they performed valuable services for the professionals by answering many minor questions that incoming students had. In this, of course, they aided also the students by speeding up their registration, and the latter went very smoothly.

But during registration the program suffered a serious internal dispute. Some say that it nothing more than the culmination of a longer development. In the event, when some students scheduled to work during certain hours failed to show up, others complained of the work-load -- registration was very busy. The director, rightly, intervened. An explosion followed as student leaders came into open conflict with the director.

5.

On the whole, the pattern set during the early training sessions continued during subsequent ones. These were characterized by more tardiness, more fatigue -- especially with the increasing lack of organized

discussion material, confusion as to the purpose of the program, and, when the registration dispute arose, a would-be conspiracy to oust the director.

And an important shift took place: these events, culminating in the registration dispute signalled a diversion of interest and concern away from the problems of counseling toward petty politics, personality differences, and student power. And while such diversions are certainly normal in the course of events which comprise any group effort, predominence in them is not. The causes here are clearly rooted in the conflicts which are sure to develope when students, anxious to do things their way, collide with professionals who, combining relative expertise with the wisdom of hindsight as to their own youthful days, attempt to guide student enthusiasm. Only a director who combined authority with an understanding of student inclinations could hope to minimize such diversions.

6.

We may now take a closer look. Upon arrival, the director had two advantages: definite material with which o lead discussions; and the fact that he was new -- something which can cut both ways. At first these advantages make combined to/the training sessions interesting, and this elicited student expectations about the director which were favorable. But later, when little if any new material was forthcoming, and with tardy trainees interrupting proceedings, the students became fatigued. Things began to run less smoothly, and, eventually getting disgruntled, the students began to wonder about why they weren't running things.

The advantage of being new then reversed itself and the director became an "outsider" who was now trying to "take over". Attention shifted from counseling and training to organization. And then, when the director required that trainees sign-in at registration to account for time worked, the students resisted, a row ensued, and finally, when one noticeable student leader confronted the director, the latter, thinking (rightly) that a show of muscle was better than humiliation, stated his views (i.e., the conditions under which he would continue as director), and asked the group members to state <u>their</u> opinions -- an indirect appeal for support.

Alas, the timing was not good because opinion split, the group divided itself between those in support of the director and those opposed. Heated discussions among students followed, training was cast momentarily aside,

and the up-shot was an abortive attempt to remove the director and return to the calmer waters of student power.

And, of course, once all this had happened the stage was set for the subsequent drama, the main acts of which were bound to take place at the Friday meetings, when everyone got together. Needless to say, any gains in terms of group cohesiveness initially accomplished were lost. And I doubt if the group ever fully recovered from that experience. The damage done to the director's prestige, nevermind his self-confidence, was such that he has not been able to gain real control of the group until recently, after most of the original members have left.

The end result of the machinations described above was a virtual stalemate between the director and those who thought thy opposed him. In the circumstances, this was a good result because political matters, though ever present, remained somewhat in abeyence. This left counseling matters more to themselves, and, indeed, once the Fall semester began and case-loads were assigned, trainees had much to keep them busy. But the Friday meetings, devoid of group cohesion, and discredited from early experiences with boredom, were bound to be avoided, or used for the purposes of advancing the current student wisdom.

7.

The reader may suspect, given the above analysis, that I must have some very curious, if possibly detectable, feelings regarding the director. I do. He is a man for whom I have great respect, as I doubt that anyone could have handled matters as well given the difficult circumstances. Also, as he is still the director, and given the very encouraging results of studies conducted on the effects of the program, he has accomplished some considerable measure of success.

But lest my intentions be obscure, may I say that my apparent emphasis on the performmce of the director serves only to indicate the importance I attach to his role. I regard it as the most crucial, the most difficult, and the most necessary within the larger group. And despite student comments to the contrary, his role has been excessively minimized, underrated, and ill appreciated. So much so in fact, that recently the director had begun to behave in accordance with then prevalent attitudes. That it took him so long to lower his enthusiasm is a credit to his endurance. And that he eventually bounced back is a measure of his dedication.

The Implications

What are we to learn from the foregoing? That is for the reader to decide. But perhaps I can stimulate some thinking.

Regarding student power. I think I can honestly say the first insight into this that I can derive from my somewhat inconsistent study of its application, is that few people are so resistant to their own improvement as are students. And this leads directly to the second: that the biggest problem facing student activists in the future will be the growing cooperation of school administrations. National feeling as to law and order notwithstanding, administrations are probably going to try to go a long way in meeting student demands, and rightly so as most are sensible; but what if students are unable to perceive this?

Take the row with the director. His action when confronted by militants was certainly not indicative of latent manifestations of authoritarinism. Yet, that was the judgement of leaders, and many others went along. It did not seem to occur to them that his action was quite normal.

And this failure in perception could be serious. Hopefully it is only endemic given the troblesomeness of the times--but what if it isn't? What are the implications when viewed against the larger dimension? If students are unable to perceive and to assess simple or pivotal actions on the part of "authorities" save within their own frame of reference, how is society to deal with them? For if students will admit no change save that which they define, and are simultaneously unable to extend the terms of definition into the larger society within which change is demanded, might they not be led into actions increasingly more characteristic of desperation, e.g., acts of violence? If so, how is society to react? What is the extent of the danger that in the process of demanding and working for change, protagonists become unwilling to concede that any has taken place?

Or, taking the worrisome view, what if student groups who advocate the need for a fundamental re-construction of society are right? The literature on the fundamental contradictions in modern industrial society is now fairly considerable, and it is growing. Might there not be something to Marcuse, Galbraith, Gorz, Sweezy, Blackburn, or even Carl Davidson of the SDS? And there are many others.

These matters, however, are somewhat more speculative. In closing, I might point out that I have not spent much time indicating the very real accomplishments of the program. This is intentional. My aim has been to show that student power did in fact have a considerable bearing on the development of the program, and I have attempted to indicate/problems that with it could have been avoided. As we may in the future expect politically alert students to participate in programs of this nature my efforts may have some relevance. No one should construe the foregoing analysis as an excercise in demonstrating how best to "co-opt" student radicals. That it has manifestly not been. Student power has some positive value, particularly as it is very critical of established modes of attacking problems. But it is also bravely anachronistic. But as student efforts at change have come distinctly ante lucem of student political maturity, it is not surprising. Nor should it be gravely frightening. There is however much room for reflection.

A final word about the program. No one should think for a moment that I failed to get much out of it, or that I value it somewhat casually. Nothing could be less true. Were it so, I hardly would have taken the time to write this analysis. In point of fact, having worked in the program for some 11 months I know of no other experience where I have learned so much about the problems of disadvantaged students, the feelings of student activists, or have had the opportunity to think about some of our most pressing contemporary needs. Also, no experience before the program impressed upon me the awareness that there are such massive needs. I will not shortly forget the lessons here. And there is no doubt that that the experience has affected unalterably the course that my life shall take. As to the success of the program in terms of actually helping students, no one who has worked in it could deny his success (save the remarkable few?), and the Gold studies certainly provides ample statistical evidence of success (I think).